182 Fashoda, which is almost where the halves meet
631 and is the focal point in the ceremonies of in-
643 vestiture.

631 I wish to emphasize that the procedure of
643 election ensures that the prince selected to be king
666 must have the backing of the whole country. Mr Thomson tells us that 'the choice rests entirely with the chiefs of Gol Dhiang and Gol Nyikang'[1] and cannot take place unless they agree, and it is clear that agreement does not depend on the personal feelings of the two men but that they are spokesmen for the halves of the country they represent. The other members of what Mr Howell and Mr Thomson call the 'electoral college' and which they say 'is a very conscious survival of the traditional structure of the Shilluk tribe'[2] have 'only to listen to the decision'[3] of these two men. The other members are the two influential chiefs of the northern and southern marches, Muomo and Tonga, nine chiefs of settlements who are descended from the original chiefs among whom Nyikang divided Shillukland when he conquered and settled his followers in it, and three important

[1] W. P. G. Thomson, 'Further Notes on the Death of a Reth of the Shilluk, 1945' (manuscript).
[2] *Op. cit.* p. 29.
[3] Thomson, *op. cit.*

chiefs of branches of the royal clan which have become dominant in powerful settlements in the country. Thus the backing, if only passive, of all parts of the kingdom is necessary before a prince can be invested with the kingship. The participation of the halves of Shillukland in the making of a king is further emphasized in the intense opposition between them expressed in the drama of the investiture, which at the same time enacts the conquest and settlement of the country by Nyikang and his followers.

Without the collective participation of the halves of the country the investiture of a king, which takes place about a year after his election, cannot be held. The ceremonies would seem to have precisely this function, for the kingship represents the whole country and a king can only be made by rites in which the whole country takes part. Hence also in the investiture all sections of the population are represented. The royal clan, its dispossessed branch, the commoner clans, especially those whose ancestors were among the original followers of Nyikang, and the client clans, all have essential roles in the drama. Different settlements in different districts of Shillukland and different clans are responsible for performing various parts of the

symbol of unity and cohesion. The main events are as follows:- 643

The funeral of the dead *reth* is carried out and is followed, a year later, by mortuary ceremonies and funeral dances. These events are chiefly a family affair and are organised by the *ororo* and the *kwareth*.

The election of the *reth* concerns the whole of the Shilluk people who are represented by the chiefs of the North and South Provinces. The *reth* is chosen from among the *nyireth* by an electoral college, composed of the descendants of the men who were, traditionally, made chiefs of the first degree by Nyikang when he parcelled out the country between eleven of his followers.(1) Three representatives from the *kwareth* are also included, but the *ororo* and *bang reth* have no representatives and take no part in the election although they are important in the ceremonies of installation. 643 666

Just as Shillukland is divided into two territorial divisions, Gerr and Lunk, so for ritual purposes this structure is represented in special ritual terms. The Northern province becomes *Gol Dhiang*, the Southern province becomes *Gol Nyikang*. There is a rough correspondence between the two political and the two ritual divisions. The chiefs of the ritual divisions are the political chiefs of Golbany and Kwom, the two settlements just north and south of Fashoda. 182 631

The election of a particular *reth* must have the backing of the whole country, although at first sight it may appear that the choice lies with the chiefs of Gol Dhiang and Gol Nyikang. The election cannot take place unless they agree and this does not involve their own personal opinions solely. The other chiefs all take part and represent the views of each section of the country and if there is disagreement between the two provinces civil war may follow. Agreement is usually reached before the electoral college sits and formally proposes and elects the new *reth*. During the interval between the death of a *reth* and the election of his successor custom requires that all potential claimants should stay in their villages. This is the chance to seize the *reth*ship by force, if a candidate wishes to do so and has the necessary backing. Co-operation between the candidate and his settlement chief is essential for only the latter has the necessary force and only a *reth*'s son is eligible for the *reth*ship. Other chiefs join the rebels and fighting will begin. Until one side is defeated, or the *nyireth* is killed there will be civil war. 631 643 666 643 669

The Installation Ceremonies

Skins, ostrich feathers and the various trappings for the pageantry of the ceremonies are provided traditionally by certain clans and settlements. The principal shrine of Nyikang is at Akurwa, where he is believed to have disappeared in a storm. At his shrine are kept effigies of Nyikang and his son Duk. Into these effigies the spirits of Nyikang and Duk may enter at any time. On the death of a *reth* new images are made, for it is believed that Nyikang's spirit, formerly in the *reth*, transfers itself to the new effigy and remains there during the inter-regnum. At the installation 643 778

(1) Howell and Thomson, *S.N.R.*, 1946, Vol.XXVII, p.29.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944)1946
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The electoral college, in whom rests the responsibility for electing a new *reth*, is a very conscious survival of the traditional structure of the Shilluk tribe, and we believe it to be composed of those who are the descendants of the men who were, at any rate traditionally, the lords-lieutenant of the various counties into which Nyikang divided his kingdom, with the inclusion of three representatives from the large royal clan.

Shilluk society is divided into four main classes, the Kwareth, Colo, Ororo, and Bang Reth, two of whom the Kwareth and Colo together represent by far the greater part of the tribe and together provide the electoral college. The Ororo and Bang Reth have very important ceremonial functions in the installing of the *reth*, but no say in his election. As has been explained in the introduction the Kwareth "class" are really an extended clan, they are the descendants of the royal house, and they all trace their ancestry back to a *nyireth* and through him and his father directly back to Nyikang. The Colo are the mass of the Shilluk people divided into many clans, who may trace their origin to a family ancestor who "came with Nyikang" to what is now Shilluk country, or claim to be pre-Shilluk inhabitants of the country, or some of those non-Shilluk accretions, which Nyikang collected to him as he pursued his conquests.

Nyikang settled the west bank of the White Nile, from "Tonga to Mwomo," (the traditional boundary in the north is Moro some four miles north of the river port at Kaka, and in the south at Fafojo about ten miles upstream of Tonga). As he went he parcelled out the country among his followers, and made eleven of them chiefs[10] of the first degree, answerable to him and looking to him for their appointment and authority. When the organization became complete the lords of the marches of Tonga and Mwomo became even more important than the others by virtue of their duties in connexion with the defence of the Shilluk boundaries and their distance from Fashoda. But although these two were the most important on the executive side of

10. They were all Colo. Kwareth, who are descended from sons of *reths*, did not, of course, exist in Nyikang's day, for he was the first *reth*.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944)1946
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the Shilluk themselves for everyday matters of administration.

Apart from these eleven Colo chiefs, three members of the Kwareth are also members of the electoral college. Each *reth* appoints one of his sons to be "responsible" for the family. This son is not necessarily elected *reth*—in fact we doubt whether he ever has been—but he is of considerable importance. The three members of the electoral college are the descendants of the heads of three great lines of the Kwareth. Why these three should be chosen, to the exclusion of other Kwareth branches is not clear. We think they are the most important because the ancestor of each, from whom his claim to membership of the college depends, was the chief son of those three branches of the family nearest to the throne. The chief of Fadiang is regarded as in some ways chief of the Kwareth, and though the other two Kwareth members are venerable chamberlains, all the houses now eligible to produce candidates for the *reth*ship are descended directly from the sons of *reth* Nyakwac, the chief of whose sons was the ancestor of the chief of Fadiang.

Such, as far as we can disentangle it, is the theory of the constitution of the electoral body. In practice there were certain difficulties due, as usual to the fact that Shilluk tradition is nowhere written down and relies upon the memories of the elder men. A comparison of the government files on the elections of 1903 and 1917 shows that the lists of chiefs forming the electoral college were more or less the same as those in 1943 and the variations were mostly accounted for by deaths, absentees etc.

The first thing that happened after the passing of *reth* Fafiti was an unofficial committee on "ways and means", whose main object seemed to be to discover what ought to be done, and who ought to do it. This process went on, more or less consciously till the end of the installation ceremonies. It was a refreshing of the memories of Shilluk tradition and history. At this meeting the members of the electoral college were decided upon and summoned to Fashoda. Certain influential chiefs seemed to think it would be impossible to

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
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643 elect a *reth* without help from government, but in the event no difficulties arose.

643 Within a week of the passing of the *reth* the members of the electoral college had met at Fashoda, and many other influential 666 chiefs and notables had gathered there as well. An unanimous choice of Anei son of Kur, the favourite of Fafiti, was made, and there seemed to be little discussion and no opposition from outside the electoral college.[11]

631 Several interesting points in connexion with the actual election procedure were noticeable. The electors divided into three groups, 643 Gol Nyikang (southern Shilluk) under the chief of Kwom, Gol Dhiang 666 (northern Shilluk) under the chief of Golbainy, and the Kwareth under the chief of Fadhiang. Agreement was first reached between the chief of Kwom and the chief of Golbainy upon Anei as *reth*, and when this agreement was announced to the other electors they seem to have agreed to it without much further discussion. This is an interesting [156] fact, and one which is not in accord with normal Shilluk practice, where a man with decided opinions upon anything is seldom overawed by time or place in expressing them. The Colo chiefs seem to have lined up behind their respective leaders, the chiefs of Gol Nyikang and Gol Dhiang, and as the choice lay in the first place with Colo, the chief of Fadhiang, on behalf of the Kwareth, had nothing to add.

It was explained to us that the whole thing hinged upon agreement of the chief of Gol Nyikang and the chief of Gol Dhiang. Had they disagreed, their respective chiefs would have ranged themselves in opposing camps. What the Kwareth would have done is difficult to say. They said they would have followed the chief of Gol Dhiang, maybe because Fadhiang is part of Gol Dhiang but many, if not most Kwareth live in Gol Nyikang. On several past occasions when a 631 *reth* has been elected there has been disagreement between Gol 643 Nyikang and Gol Dhiang, presumably because the two chiefs failed 666 to reach agreement. It was the disagreement between these two 669 which produced civil war between the two halves of the country, or

11. The "canvassing" of one of the sons of *reth* Fadiet never amounted to opposition.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944)1946
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government intervention in the past. As several of the electors said, "if there had not been agreement between the chiefs of Gol Dhiang and Gol Nyikang, we should have gone home, each behind our leader" —presumably to prepare for war.

At the meetings of the electoral college etiquette was very strict, and as far as we could make out, the order, in theory, was that the chief of Gol Nyikang proposes a candidate to the chief of Gol Dhiang; no doubt this is in fact discussed privately by the two chiefs. The chief of Gol Dhiang replies agreeing to the proposal (or not, as the case may be). In fact there is not much more for the other members to say, though they doubtless know before hand, and may even have some say in who is to be the candidate proposed by their chief. Should any chief of notable, outside the electoral college, be sitting at their meeting, as did in fact happen, he would be very careful not to do more than listen. He would feel it quite out of place to express an opinion, however important his position might be. We think that on the surface at least considerable honour was paid to the observance of this etiquette. It would, however, have been odd if there had not been a great deal of "lobbying."

During the interval between the death of a *reth* and the election of his successor and his initial establishment in Fashoda there is an awkward period in which the Shilluk feel a sense of potential danger. Custom requires that all *nyireths*, potential claimants to the throne, should remain at home. Should anyone among them wish to defy custom and try to obtain a following to instal himself in Fashoda, this is his chance. After the electoral college has agreed upon a new *reth* the chances of a pretender become much less, though the period of danger is never quite over till after the installation of the chosen *reth* by Nyikang in Fashoda. The danger from ambush, illness, or disaster attributed to the *reth* always exists.

The procedure for seizing the throne of Fashoda by force is as follows. A *nyireth* who is living in a section of the Shilluk, and who fancies his chances of becoming *reth*, persuades, or is persuaded by the chief of his settlement or section to start an insurrection; without the co-operation of the *nyireth* and his chief an insurrection is impos-

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
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APPENDIX I.

DETAILS OF CHIEFS COMPOSING THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE.

The following chiefs composed the electoral college in 1943:-

1. Chief of Debalo Kwom (chief of Gol Nyikang).
2. " " Golbainy " " " Dhiang).
3. " " Mwomo.
4. " " Tonga.
5. " " Delal Ajak.
6. " " Bur Nyiliec (Athodwoi division).
7. " " Othecogo (Detwok division).
8. " " Fadit (Wau division).
9. " " Owaliny Obwa (Malakal division).
10. " " Adodo Dettim.
11. " " Fanyikang.
12. " " Acago (Detwok division).
13. " " Fadiang (Golbainy division).
14. " " Yoiny (Fashoda division).

Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 are explained adequately in the text.

Nos. 5, 8, and 11 are the traditional big chiefs, whose ancestors held the *lan dwong* or "high robe of office" from Nyikang. They are still in possession of the *lan dwong*.

Nos. 7 and 10 have only recently been displaced by Government from the *lan dwong* owing to inefficiency. The *lan dwong* will naturally tend to revert to their lineages when a vacancy occurs.

Nos. 6 and 9 are chiefs with an ancient claim to the *lan dwong* which their ancestors possessed in the days of Nyikang. They have sunk into unimportance, because of the shrinkage of their lineage.

Nos. 12, 13 and 14 are the three Kwareth members.

Nos. 13, the chief of Fadiang, is looked upon as the chief of all the Kwareth.

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944)1946
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The Electoral College of 1903 consisted of 12, 13 and 14, 1, 2, 7, 8. (only seven names are given). 631 643 666

The Electoral College of 1917 consisted of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13. There also appeared the chief of Athodwoi, in place of the chief Bur Nyiliec (6), and the chiefs of Nyigir, Abienyai (in Detwok division), and Kodok. The chiefs of Bur Nyiliec, Owaliny Obwa, Fanyikang and Yoiny were not present. The chief of Abienyai may have represented the chief of Yoiny.

It is noteworthy that in 1917 the chiefs of Kwom and Golbainy and the Kwareth chiefs of Fadiang and Acago were all bribed by Coti Ajang, the pretender. This is an indication of who were the most influential chiefs in the college. N.B. The chief of Yoiny was not there to be bribed. [662]

APPENDIX II.

NYIKANG AND DAK, AND THE EQUIPMENT CARRIED WITH THEM.

Nyikang and Dak.

The effigy of Nyikang was made up of a tubular framework of bamboo rods covered with blue check imported cloth. The body at the top appeared to be about 14 inches in diameter tapering to about 9 inches. Wound round the top and tied in a knot like a cravat was a separate piece of cloth hanging down below the base of the body. On the first two days of Nyikang's journey this 'cravat' was of black cloth. When the party reached Golbainy, it was of the same blue check cloth as the body. The head of the effigy consisted of a mop-like plume of black ostrich feathers which hung down over the knot in the cravat. Overall the effigy was about 5 feet long. 643 778

The effigy of Dak was differently constructed. It consisted of a long bamboo pole, about 8 feet in length, with a cylindrical body of the same blue cloth some 2 foot 6 inches long, at the top of the pole. The head was made of a smaller bunch of black ostrich feathers than that of Nyikang.

20: Thomson G-5 (1945-1946) 1948 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

766 maiden was sealed up alive in the hut along with the corpse, which is also said to be traditional.

Fafiti Yor died in September 1943, and his funeral dance was held in November. Anei Kur died in November 1945, and his funeral dance was not held until October 1946. This longer interval was also more in accord with Shilluk custom, which holds that there should be an [643] interval of about a year between the death of a *reth* and the installation of a successor. The installation ceremonies should follow quickly upon the funeral dance for the deceased, and should take place after the harvest is ripe.

Two days before the dance, the remains of *reth* Anei were brought secretly, and by night, from Fadwol to Golbainy where his private village had been, and were buried in his house. The remains were brought by Ororo under the supervision of Gol Nyidhok, the descendants of Nyidhok, the grand father of Anei. The dance took place there and only occupied two days. It was less well attended, and the contingents not so well marshalled as in 1943, but the essential characteristics were the same, and there were the same arguments about how long it should last. The ceremonies were in the hands of the eldest son of the deceased, and of Kwanyireth Bol Acien, the chief of Lul, who had taken a large part in 1943. The chief of the Kwareth, who was senile in 1943, had died in the meantime, but his successor in office, a young man, took no part. The *reth* remained purposely in Fashoda, and did not come to Golbainy at all. It was noticed that, as bulls were slaughtered, the horns and tails were hung on to the palisade surrounding the house where *reth* Anei lay buried, and his cattle bells and other ornaments were displayed by *bangreth* in front of the tomb, spread out upon a bull skin.

The election of Reth Dak Fadiet.

643 On the death of *reth* Anei the electoral college were summoned,
66 as in 1943, by Jago Tabo of Golbainy for Gol Dhiang and Jago
631 Yorleiker of Kwom for Gol Nyikang, the two great ceremonial divisions of the Shilluk kingdom. The composition of the college was the same as in 1943, except that the chiefs of Bur Nyiliec and Owaliny Obwa could not attend owing to illness. It was clearer to me than before that the choice rests entirely with the chiefs of Gol Dhiang and Gol Nyikang. I doubt whether even the chief of the Kwareth has any influence: he and the other members of the college have only to listen to the decision.

643 *Reth* Anei had not lived long enough to adopt a *nyireth*, as *reth*

20: Thomson G-5 (1945-1946) 1948 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Fafiti had done. Opinion was decided that the succession lay with the sons of Fadiet, and as the electors gathered at Fashoda, so the sons of Fadiet left their homes and came within easy reach. This was a breach of tradition, which demands that all *nyireth* at such a time should remain quietly at home. It gave rise to certain fears among the chiefs that some *nyireth* might try to instal himself in vacant Fashoda by force. There was no evidence in the event that any *nyireth* had had such an intention. 643

The sons of Fadiet were not well known to the chiefs; unlike the sons of Kur, they had a reputation for being quiet and unassertive. There was no obvious choice designated, as Anei had been designated by Fafiti. The two king-makers reduced the sons of Fadiet to a short list of four names, and waited for a lead from me, as they could not decide upon any one of these four. After my suggestion that Dak *Fadiet of Falo, one of their short list*, would be a good choice, the chiefs at once agreed to him. There had been rumours of bribery, as in 1917, and two bribes were known to have been offered to, and refused by, Jago Tabo of Golbainy, the chief of Gol Dhiang. One had been offered by *nyireth* Nyikang Kur, a " princess " of evil repute, who wished her uterine brother, a son of *reth* Fadiet, to succeed. It appeared from a discussion with the two kingmakers that bribery on such a solemn occasion would result in certain death for the recipient at the hands of Nyikang and was out of the question. This may be so, and would be a reasonable tribal sanction to ensure an unbiassed choice. There was a suggestion from the southern Shilluk, where most of the sons of Fadiet live, that the electoral college with its northern bias would choose a *reth* from the north. There was no sign of this, because it was agreed at once that a son of Fadiet must succeed, and no one of these sons lived north of Fashoda. The feeling in the south that the north has more influence in Fashoda probably arose because the lines of *reth* Yor and *reth* Kur both come from the north and only that of *reth* Kwathker and his son Fadiet from the south. Fashoda itself is considered to be in the northern half of the kingdom. 643 666 [648] 662 643 666 [687] 643 666 631

Dak Fadiet was initially installed, and ceremonially washed and shaved by Ororo girls in Fashoda on 18.11.45. He was followed by a large crowd of some hundreds of armed men from Gol Nyikang and particularly from his own area of Fanyidwai and all the Colo chiefs present. His following was much larger than that of Anei in 1943. The crowd may have been expressing simple gratification that at last a *reth* had come from the south; they may have been there to try and prevent a candidate from the north being installed. But the ceremony 643

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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766 535 at length the drums cease to throb, the last of the animals are sacrificed and the meat distributed to the dancers and the people disperse to their homes. The king is dead. . . .

643 666 [642] [669] The country has not, however, remained without a king all this time. The period of interregnum is one of disquiet, and there is always the real fear that one of the nyireth may make a bid for the throne. As soon as possible, then, after the king's death, within a few days in fact, the electorate council meets to choose the new king. This council is made up of eleven chiefs of the Colo, the descendants of the original companions of Nyikang, and three members of the royal houses.

[175] [631] When Nyikang first settled the country he divided it into eleven major districts, appointing a chief to each. These chiefs were all Colo since, as Nyikang was the first Reth, the Kwareth had not then come into being. These eleven chiefs form the board of electors, and with them sit three of the [614] Kwareth, one from each of the three royal houses, those of Papiti, Fadiet and Yor, whose sons are eligible for the kingship. Among these three families there may be as many as forty or fifty nyireth, entitled as such to consideration for the vacant throne. It is generally accepted, however, though not a hard and fast rule, that the three royal families should provide a king in rotation, and it is certainly understood that the family of the late king is automatically ruled out. Attention is therefore concentrated on the claims of the candidates from the other two houses, with the weight of opinion in favour of that one which has the more remotely provided a king. Many of the nyireth are eliminated at once on account of old age, extreme youth, physical debility, weakness of character, etc., and the merits and demerits of the rest are given serious consideration, until the number is reduced to half a dozen or less from among whom the final choice is made. How selection is finally made is the secret of the council. Sometimes the late king may have 'adopted' a certain nyireth, and thus indicated his wish in the matter of his successor. Such an indication does not mean that the king's protégé will certainly be chosen but it will have great

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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weight in the deliberations of the electorate. Sometimes, too, when the final choice is a difficult one, it would seem that the selectors have recourse to augury and divination. A number of small stones, one for each candidate, is placed in a fierce fire. A stone that glows red indicates that, under the prince it represents, cattle will be plentiful in the country; a white-hot stone would presage an abundance of grain in the new rule; one glowing both white and red would entail an era of plenty both in cattle and grain, whilst that which merely blackens and bursts would unanimously be rejected.

When the decision is at last reached, one of the great chiefs goes unobtrusively and by night to the village where the king-elect is living. During the deliberations of the electorate all nyireths are required to remain in their own homes and not to approach the neighbourhood of Fashoda; this precaution is taken to ensure that no nyireth should rush the capital and usurp the power for himself. The chief challenges the nyireth to a mock battle and when he has thus given a token of his prowess and valour the news of his election is formally broken to him. He is brought quietly, again under cover of night, to Fashoda, and at daybreak inducted with ceremony into his capital. When these preliminaries are over and the reth-elect is settled in Fashoda, the news of his election is noised abroad, and chiefs and nyireths come in from all parts of the country to pay their respects to their new king. The situation has become somewhat easier now, since with the accomplished fact, there is little likelihood of an armed insurrection taking place. There is always of course the possibility of any nyireth asserting his right to the throne and proving it by slaying the king in single combat, and in former days it was customary for the king to slaughter as many of the nyireths as he could lay his hands on—a most effective method of reducing the potential danger to himself.

The period between the election and the solemn installation of the king is roughly a year. During this time the land is, as it were, dead, for the spirit of Nyikang still lacks its habitual abode, and is under interdict. No great public dances may be held, except the funeral dances for the late